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ABSTRACT

This novel relates the story of Jesse and Abel, two Mexican American brothers trying to improve their life situation and and escape their heritage of tedious physical labor by furthering their education through junior college. Jesse loves his mother, but grows tired of his mean and disrespectful Anglo stepfather. Jesse doesn't understand why his mother continues to put up with his stepfather's drinking and demeaning comments about Mexican Americans. He also is unable to see the relevance of his schooling when his goal is to become an artist. Jesse quits high school in his senior year and joins his brother at a local community college. Together the brothers receive $180 dollars a month from Social Security because, years earlier, their father was killed in an accident at work. Jesse and his brother supplement their income by working in the fields on weekends. Although hesitant, Jesse becomes involved in protesting the working conditions of migrant farmworkers, many of whom are Mexican American. The book relates the brothers' educational experiences, the racial discrimination they encounter, and the painful process of growing up. Eventually, Abel is drafted into the Vietnam War. Jesse is torn between joining his brother in the war or continuing a life of working in the fields. (LP)

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